



PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE,  
MAY 1977 (PRELIMINARY)

INQUIRIES

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MAIN FEATURES

In May 1977 an estimated 2,722,900 persons aged 15 to 64 years were not in the labour force, i.e. were not employed or not taking active steps to look for a job. Of these —

- 401,700 intended to look for full-time or part-time work in the following 12 months and a further 156,800 persons stated they might look.
- 2,040,100 had had a job at some previous time; of the 267,300 males in this category, 91,600 had left because of ill health or injury and 81,400 because it was a seasonal or temporary job or they had gone back to school.
- 65,500 persons were discouraged job-seekers, ie they wanted a job but were not looking for work because they believed that there were no suitable jobs in their locality, that employers considered them too young or too old, or that they lacked the necessary schooling, experience, etc.
- 17,100 persons were not looking for work because they believed there were no jobs available with suitable hours.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

In May 1977 a survey, based on the quarterly population survey, was conducted throughout Australia in order to obtain information about persons aged 15 to 64 years who were not in the labour force, in particular, their intentions regarding entering or re-entering the labour force, whether they had ever held a regular job and, if so, how long ago and for what reason they had left it, and their educational qualifications. The results of a similar survey in November 1975 were published in *Persons Not in the Labour Force* (Catalogue No. 6220.0, Previously Ref No. 6.59)

2. This statement contains only a summary of the more important results of the survey. More detailed estimates, which will be published in a bulletin to be issued as soon as possible, are available on request. The estimates shown are preliminary and are subject to revision.

The population survey

3. The survey is based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings (about 30,000 houses, flats, etc.) and non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, etc.), and covers about two-thirds of one per cent of the population of Australia. The information is obtained each quarter from the occupants of selected dwellings by carefully chosen and specially trained interviewers. Interviews are carried out during a period of four weeks, so that in each of the months to which the survey relates, there are four survey weeks, chosen so as to fall within the limits of the calendar month or with minimum encroachment into the adjacent months.

Scope

4. The survey estimates generally relate to all persons aged 15 years and over, except persons in institutions, members of the permanent armed forces and certain diplomatic personnel customarily excluded from census and estimated populations. Persons in institutions are those who were patients in hospitals and sanatoria, or inmates of gaols, reformatories, etc., and for whom, for the purpose of the survey, the institution was regarded as their dwelling. The estimates in Tables 2 to 5 relate only to persons aged 15 to 64 years.

Definitions

5. Definitions of *employed*, *unemployed* and *not in the labour force* used in this statement conform to those used in the quarterly population survey. Reference should be made to the May 1977 issue of the quarterly bulletin *The Labour Force*.

6. A *regular job* was defined as one which had

lasted for two months or more and in which the person had worked at least an average of five hours a week.

7. *Discouraged job-seekers* were defined as persons who wanted a job but were not looking for work because of any of the following reasons: considered too young or too old by employers; language or racial difficulties; lacked necessary training, skills or experience; or no jobs in locality or line of work.

8. Persons included in the survey who were not looking for work were asked to give reasons why they were not doing so (to a maximum of three). Reasons were ranked in the order of priority shown in Table 4. Where more than one reason was given, only the higher or highest-ranked has been included in the estimates in Table 4.

9. *Full-time* work was defined as work normally occupying 35 hours or more per week.

#### Reliability of the estimates

10. Since the estimates in this statement are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if the information had been obtained from occupants of all dwellings. One measure of the likely difference is given by the *standard error*, which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of dwellings was included in the survey. Estimates with a standard error of more than about 20 per cent have not been shown as the degree of sampling variability would seriously detract from their value for most reasonable uses. Although in some cases figures for these small

components can be derived by subtraction they should not be regarded as reliable. More information on this topic, together with a table of estimated standard errors, is given in the quarterly bulletin *The Labour Force*.

#### Related publications

11. Other ABS publications which may be of interest include:

- *The Labour Force* (Catalogue No. 6203.0 Previously Ref. No. 6.20)
- *Labour Mobility* (Catalogue No. 6208.0 Previously Ref.No.6.34)
- *Labour Force Experience* (Catalogue No.6206.0 Previously Ref.No. 6.26)
- *Persons Looking for Work* (Catalogue No. 6222.0 Previously Ref. No. 6.60)

12. An up-to-date list of population survey reports is given in *The Labour Force* each quarter.

13. Publications produced by the ABS are listed in *Catalogue of Publications 1977* (Catalogue No.1101.0 Previously Ref. No. 1.8) which is available free of charge from any ABS office.

#### Symbols and other usages

- \* Subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses.
- .. Not applicable.

Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components in tables are due to rounding.

**R.J. CAMERON**  
Australian Statistician

TABLE 1. CIVILIAN POPULATION 15 YEARS AND OVER (a): EMPLOYMENT STATUS, MAY 1977

	Number ('000)			Per cent of total		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Civilian population aged 15 years and over (a)	4,958.4	5,081.3	10,039.7	100.0	100.0	100.0
Employed (b)	3,824.5	2,059.4	5,883.8	77.1	40.5	58.6
Unemployed (b)	170.1	144.0	314.2	3.4	2.8	3.1
Not in the labour force (b)	963.8	2,877.9	3,841.7	19.4	56.6	38.3
Aged 65 years or more	435.1	683.6	1,118.8	8.8	13.5	11.1
Aged 15 to 64 years	528.7	2,194.3	2,722.9	10.7	43.2	27.1
Inmate of institution, permanently unable to work, boarding school student	69.3	28.3	97.6	1.4	0.6	1.0
Had not looked for work in the four weeks before interview week	449.8	2,142.8	2,592.6	9.1	42.2	25.8
Had had a regular job	267.3	1,772.8	2,040.1	5.4	34.9	20.3
Had not had a regular job	182.5	370.0	552.5	3.7	7.3	5.5
Would have liked a job at the time of the survey	83.2	388.9	472.0	1.7	7.6	4.7
Might have liked a job at the time of the survey	12.7	61.2	73.9	0.3	1.2	0.7
Would not have liked a job at the time of the survey	347.2	1,660.3	2,007.5	7.0	32.7	20.0
Did not know whether would have liked job at the time of the survey	6.6	32.5	39.1	0.1	0.6	0.4
Intended to look for work in the next 12 months	136.2	265.6	401.7	2.7	5.2	4.0
Might look for work in the next 12 months	26.8	130.1	156.8	0.5	2.6	1.6
Did not intend to look for work in the next 12 months	257.4	1,659.6	1,917.0	5.2	32.7	19.1
Did not know whether would look for work in the next 12 months (c)	29.4	87.6	117.0	0.6	1.7	1.2
Other (d)	9.6	23.2	32.8	0.2	0.5	0.3

(a) For a note on persons excluded, see page 1, paragraph 4. (b) For definition see *The Labour Force*, May 1977. (c) Includes 11,700 persons (7,900 females) who had a job to go to. (d) Persons who, though they had looked for work in the four weeks before interview week, had taken no active steps to obtain employment and/or were unable to start a job in the week before interview week for reasons other than their own temporary illness or injury.

TABLE 2. PERSONS AGED 15 TO 64 YEARS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE WHO HAD HAD A REGULAR JOB (a):  
TIME SINCE LAST REGULAR JOB AND REASON FOR LEAVING IT, MAY 1977  
(<sup>'000</sup>)

Reason for leaving last regular job (b)	Time since last regular job (b)							Total
	Under 6 months	6 months and under 1 year	1 year and under 3 years	3 years and under 5 years	5 years and under 10 years	10 years and under 20 years	20 years and over	
	MALES							
Dismissed,retrenched	7.1	*	6.2	*	*	*	*	19.3
Seasonal/temporary job/went back to school	56.9	6.5	14.3	*	*	*	*	81.4
Retired/did not want to work any longer	11.2	9.1	16.7	10.4	4.8	*	*	53.6
Own ill health or injury	11.1	7.7	30.0	17.5	15.8	7.3	*	91.6
Other reasons	9.9	*	4.5	*	*	*	*	21.3
Total	96.1	29.4	71.7	33.6	23.8	9.3	*	267.3
FEMALES								
Dismissed, retrenched	17.1	14.2	32.6	18.5	14.3	9.2	6.0	112.0
Seasonal/temporary job/went back to school	65.4	26.2	43.3	16.6	17.5	9.2	5.3	183.4
Retired/did not want to work any longer	26.7	16.9	42.2	34.0	40.4	37.1	20.3	217.6
Unsatisfactory work arrangements	6.3	4.5	10.9	5.3	4.9	*	*	35.5
Own ill health or injury	13.6	13.8	32.9	32.1	30.6	21.5	8.4	152.9
Left to get married	*	*	10.7	15.4	53.4	82.7	226.1	392.5
Pregnancy/to have children	26.8	27.3	84.6	77.0	110.3	66.6	33.9	426.4
To look after family or other person	12.3	10.6	23.1	18.6	19.5	16.6	21.2	122.0
Travel, moved house, spouse transferred	10.7	10.1	24.4	17.7	21.6	19.9	10.2	114.6
Other reasons	*	*	4.0	*	*	*	*	16.0
Total	183.5	127.6	308.5	236.7	315.2	266.9	334.4	1,772.8
PERSONS								
Dismissed, retrenched	24.2	16.9	38.8	20.7	15.1	9.5	6.2	131.4
Seasonal/temporary job/went back to school	122.4	32.7	57.6	18.9	18.7	9.3	5.3	264.8
Retired/did not want to work any longer	37.9	25.9	58.9	44.4	45.1	38.3	20.6	271.2
Unsatisfactory work arrangements	9.9	5.5	12.3	5.7	5.1	*	*	42.5
Own ill health or injury	24.7	21.5	62.9	49.7	46.3	28.8	10.6	244.4
Left to get married	*	*	10.7	15.4	53.4	82.8	226.1	392.7
Pregnancy/ to have children	26.8	27.3	84.6	77.0	110.3	66.6	33.9	426.4
To look after family or other person	13.1	10.9	23.5	18.8	19.7	16.6	21.2	123.9
Travel, moved house,spouse transferred	13.8	11.6	26.0	18.1	21.8	19.9	10.3	121.4
Other reasons	5.6	*	5.1	*	*	*	*	21.3
Total	279.6	157.0	380.3	270.3	339.0	276.2	337.8	2,040.1

(a) For definition, see page 1, paragraph 6.

\* Less than 4,000. See page 2, paragraph 10.



TABLE 3. PERSONS AGED 15 TO 64 YEARS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE : FAMILY STATUS, WHETHER WOULD LIKE A JOB (a) AND WHETHER INTENDING TO LOOK FOR WORK IN THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS, MAY 1977 ('000)

	Intended to look or might look for work in the next 12 months			Did not intend to look for work in the next 12 months or did not know			Total		
	Would like a job (b)	Would not like a job (c)	Total	Would like a job (b)(d)	Would not like a job (c)	Total	Would like a job (b)(d)	Would not like a job (c)	Total
MALES									
Member of a family (e)	66.7	76.9	143.5	18.3	229.5	247.8	85.0	306.3	391.3
Husband	15.3	8.5	23.8	8.1	101.0	109.1	23.4	109.5	132.9
with dependent children (f) present	8.4	*	11.9	*	21.7	24.7	11.4	25.2	36.6
without dependent children (f) present	6.9	5.1	11.9	5.1	79.3	84.4	12.0	84.3	96.3
Not married (g) head of family	*	*	*	*	4.4	5.0	*	4.9	6.3
Full-time students 15-20 years of age	41.1	57.5	98.6	7.4	104.8	112.2	48.5	162.4	210.8
Other child (h) of family head	8.5	9.1	17.5	*	14.2	16.1	10.4	23.2	33.6
Other relative (parent, brother, etc)	*	*	*	*	5.2	5.4	*	6.4	7.7
Not a member of a family (i)	9.0	10.4	19.4	*	37.1	39.0	10.9	47.5	58.4
Total	75.7	87.2	162.9	20.2	266.6	286.8	95.9	353.8	449.7
FEMALES									
Member of a family (e)	250.6	126.0	376.6	184.1	1,463.2	1,647.4	434.7	1,589.2	2,024.0
Wife	177.9	60.7	238.6	153.9	1,212.7	1,366.5	(j)331.8	1,273.3	1,605.1
with dependent children (f) present	143.3	48.7	192.0	117.6	724.9	842.6	260.9	773.7	1,034.6
without dependent children (f) present	34.6	11.9	46.5	36.2	487.7	523.9	70.8	499.7	570.5
Not married (g) head of family	21.9	8.6	30.4	16.7	95.3	112.0	38.6	103.9	142.5
with dependent children (f) present	19.2	7.4	26.5	13.6	60.9	74.5	32.8	68.3	101.0
without dependent children (f) present	*	*	*	*	34.4	37.5	5.8	35.6	41.4
Full-time students 15-20 years of age	43.5	51.6	95.1	11.5	109.3	120.8	55.0	160.9	215.9
Other child (h) of family head	5.6	4.3	9.9	*	18.8	20.5	7.4	23.0	30.4
Other relative (parent, sister, etc)	*	*	*	*	27.2	27.5	*	28.1	30.1
Not a member of a family (i)	9.6	9.4	19.0	5.7	94.1	99.8	15.3	103.5	118.8
Total	260.2	135.4	395.6	189.8	1,557.4	1,747.2	450.0	1,692.8	2,142.8
PERSONS									
Member of a family (e)	317.3	202.9	520.1	202.5	1,692.7	1,895.2	519.7	1,895.6	2,415.3
Husband or wife	193.2	69.2	262.4	162.0	1,313.6	1,475.6	355.2	1,382.8	1,738.0
with dependent children (f) present	151.7	52.2	203.9	120.6	746.7	867.3	272.4	798.9	1,071.2
without dependent children (f) present	41.5	17.0	58.5	41.3	567.0	608.3	82.8	584.0	666.8
Not married (g) head of family	22.6	9.1	31.7	17.3	99.7	117.0	39.9	108.8	148.7
with dependent children (f) present	19.3	7.4	26.6	13.6	62.4	76.1	32.9	69.8	102.7
without dependent children (f) present	*	*	5.1	*	37.3	41.0	7.1	39.0	46.0
Full-time students 15-20 years of age	84.6	109.1	193.7	18.9	214.1	233.0	(k)103.5	323.2	426.7
Other child (h) of family head	14.1	13.3	27.4	*	32.9	36.6	17.8	46.3	64.1
Other relative (parent, brother, etc.)	*	*	4.9	*	32.3	32.9	*	34.5	37.8
Not a member of a family (i)	18.7	19.8	38.5	7.5	131.3	138.8	26.2	151.0	177.3
Total	335.9	222.6	558.6	210.0	1,824.0	2,034.0	546.0	2,046.6	2,592.6

(a) Full-time or part-time (b) Comprises persons who would have or might have liked a job at the time of the survey. (c) Includes persons who did not know whether they would have liked a job at the time of the survey. (d) Includes 11,700 persons who had a job to go to. (e) For definition, see the Appendix to *The Labour Force*, May 1977. (f) Comprises all family members who were under 15 years of age or full-time students aged 15 to 20 years. (g) Includes widowed, divorced and permanently separated. (h) Of any age. (i) Persons living by themselves or not related to any other member of the household in which they were living. (j) 82.7 per cent of wives (comprising 218,600 with dependent children present and 55,700 without dependent children present) expressed a preference for part-time work. (k) 59.4 per cent of full-time students (comprising 26,300 males and 35,200 females) expressed a preference for part-time work.

\* Less than 4,000. See page 2, paragraph 10.

TABLE 4. PERSONS AGED 15 TO 64 YEARS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE WHO WOULD LIKE A JOB (a):  
REASON FOR NOT LOOKING FOR WORK (b) AND WHETHER INTENDING TO LOOK FOR  
WORK IN THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS, MAY 1977  
(<sup>c</sup>000)

Reason for not looking for work (b)	Intention to look for work in the next twelve months				Total		
	Intended to look	Might look	Would not look	Did not know	Males	Females	Persons
Had a job to go to	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)	*	7.9	11.7
Own ill health, disability, pregnancy	25.4	12.9	20.9	5.4	17.2	47.4	64.7
Attending an educational institution	77.5	9.5	15.5	*	50.9	54.7	105.6
Had no need to work	11.5	12.7	24.2	*	5.1	46.0	51.1
Family considerations (d)	64.5	41.8	83.1	13.5	*	200.8	202.9
Ill health of other than self	—	6.2	4.5	*	*	10.6	11.3
Unable to find child care	8.1	5.4	7.6	*	*	21.7	21.8
Preferred to look after children	36.2	24.3	56.5	7.2	*	123.8	124.3
Other family considerations	15.3	8.0	9.5	*	*	35.6	36.4
Discouraged (e)	32.2	13.5	16.4	*	7.7	57.8	65.5
Considered too young or too old by employers	4.1	*	4.9	*	*	9.3	11.5
Language or racial difficulties, lacked necessary schooling, training, skills or experience	—	4.0	*	*	*	5.6	6.3
No jobs in locality or line of work	25.2	10.3	9.6	*	4.8	42.9	47.7
No jobs in suitable hours	10.0	—	6.6	*	*	15.2	17.1
Other reasons	17.3	*	5.0	*	7.2	20.2	27.4
Total							
Males	63.9	11.8	14.3	5.9	95.9	..	..
Females	174.4	85.8	153.9	35.9	..	450.0	..
Persons	(c)238.3	(c)97.6	(c)168.3	(c)41.8	..	..	546.0

(a) See footnote (b) to Table 3. (b) Highest ranked reason only, see page 2, paragraph 8. (c) Intention to look for work in the next twelve months was not asked of persons who were not looking for work because they already had a job to go to. (d) Includes 9,100 females whose spouse disapproved of their taking a job. (e) For definition, see page 2, paragraph 7.

\* Less than 4,000. See page 2, paragraph 10.

TABLE 5. PERSONS AGED 15 TO 64 YEARS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE WHO WERE INTENDING TO LOOK FOR WORK IN THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS (a) : AGE, MARITAL STATUS AND WHETHER PREFERRED FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME WORK (b), MAY 1977 ('000)

Whether preferred to work full-time or part-time	Age group (years)							Total
	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	
MALES								
Full-time work preferred	66.7	18.4	8.5	4.4	5.1	*	*	105.3
Part-time work preferred	33.2	7.5	*	*	*	*	4.1	52.7
Total(c)	101.1	26.5	11.9	5.7	8.6	*	5.4	162.9
MARRIED WOMEN (d)								
Full-time work preferred	*	9.0	14.0	8.9	4.9	*	*	39.4
Part-time work preferred	*	22.2	78.7	51.1	35.2	8.8	*	201.4
Total (c)	4.7	32.2	95.5	63.0	42.1	10.2	*	250.1
OTHER FEMALES								
Full-time work preferred	60.5	10.4	4.0	*	*	*	*	79.0
Part-time work preferred	42.0	6.0	5.3	*	4.1	*	*	64.0
Total (c)	104.4	16.4	9.5	5.6	5.5	*	*	145.6
ALL FEMALES								
Full-time work preferred	61.7	19.4	18.0	11.1	6.1	*	*	118.4
Part-time work preferred	45.3	28.2	84.0	54.6	39.3	10.5	*	265.4
Total (c)	109.2	48.6	105.0	68.6	47.7	12.6	4.0	395.6
PERSONS								
Full-time work preferred	128.5	37.9	26.5	15.5	11.2	*	*	223.8
Part-time work preferred	78.5	35.8	86.9	55.2	41.6	12.5	7.6	318.0
No preference	4.9		7.1		4.8			16.8
Total	210.3	75.2	116.9	74.3	56.3	16.2	9.4	558.6

(a) Includes persons who stated that they might look for work in the next twelve months. (b) For definition see page 2, paragraph 9. (c) Includes persons who did not state a preference. (d) Includes permanently separated.

\* Less than 4,000. See page 2, paragraph 10.